

Christmas Days

Judd Mortimer Lewis

ROBERT J. SHORES, Publisher



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of

Christmas Days



-Eleanor Howard-

CHRISTMAS DAYS

By

JUDD MORTIMER LEWIS



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*To the Little Mothers of the World this book of
verse is dedicated. For them no bands play and
no banners wave, yet the battles they wage for
their loved ones, call for more fortitude, more
sacrifice, more suffering, than the soldier en-
dures upon the field of battle. God be with the
Mothers of the world, for only as they triumph
can the world grow better.*

JUDD MORTIMER LEWIS.

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Christmas Days

CHRISTMAS DAYS

CHRISTMAS days, and Christmas ways
And, oh, the Christmas weather!
Little boys and painted toys
And wee glad girls together;
And Santa Claus a-flinging things,
And dancing as he flings 'em;
Mother crooning Christmas songs
And laughing as she sings 'em.

Children's days, and children's ways,
And green trees decorated
With red carts and tinsel hearts,
All wants anticipated!
Never one wee babe forgot,
And never one that's slighted!
Ring-around-a-rosy-time,
With all the candles lighted!

Little girls with yellow curls,
And manly boys to love 'em!
Mistletoe hung way down low,
Just bound to get above 'em!
Love gifts for the older ones,
And green and scarlet holly,
Shrieks of glee from everywhere,
In a whole world gone jolly.

Dinner time, and tots to climb
Up into chairs beside you,
Goodies sweet, and things to eat—
Oh, whate'er may betide you
Christmas with the little folks,
Filled with joy that bubbles,
Is worth years of toil and moil
And worth a year of troubles.

Christmas nights and lowered lights,
And tousleheads all sleeping,
Everywhere on floor and chair
Toys in careless heaping;
Dimpled arms all holding tight
An engine or a dolly—
Thank God for the Christmas-time,
And mistletoe and holly!

TOO SMALL

SOMETIMES I wish the Lord had
made me with a whole lot bigger
heart;
The one I've got gets so blamed full o' joy
sometimes the teardrops start
With the sweet pain it throbs full of, when
it's stretched till it's 'bout to break;
A sort of indescribable, a deep, exquisite
sort of ache!
Like if another drop o' joy was poured into
it, it would bust
And fill the world with happiness; I sort o'
feel sometimes I must
Hop up onto a branch and sing, or simply
choke with the distress
That comes o' havin' a heart made too
small to hold its happiness.

If I could only pour it out like a wild bird
pours out its song,
It wouldn't be so bad; I could go a-singin'
of it all day long;
And that would sort o' take the ache out
of a heart that's made too small;
But, shoo! I couldn't keep a tune! I bed
the horse down in his stall,
And fill his manger full o' feed, and sort o'
pat him on the flanks,
And that's 'bout all that I can do. I ain't
got language to give thanks;
And all the critters on the place know me,
and foller at my heels;
But when a feller's heart's too small, there
ain't no tellin' how it feels.

But I talk some; and that is more than what
the horse can do, or cow;
If I was shut up like they are I don't know
what I'd do, or how
I'd get along; I'd have to quit the farm and
them and go away;
I'd have to find me out a place where little
children never play,

Where breezes never come at all, and bring
the Southland's sweet perfume,
Where cows don't moo, nor horses neigh,
nor dogs don't bark, nor roses bloom,
Nor where the yellow sun don't shine, nor
where the stars don't blink of nights,
Nor where, when darkness wraps the earth,
there ain't no cottage window lights.

An' 'cause there ain't no place like that I'm
mighty glad that I can talk
An' tell things to the violets that bloom
beside the garden walk;
An' tell things to the cow an' horse, an'
play with children in the sun,
An' lift them to the fence to jump into my
arms, when work is done,
An' pick the reddest roses for the woman
that puts up with me,
Who, when I'm glad, seems to be glad as
anyone could ever be;
An' I can whistle some, an' I can fling back
the wildbird's mornin' call;
But when a feller's glad as me it hurts to
have a heart so small.

JUST BECAUSE I'M HAPPY

IT ain't to please the people that I
hollerin' hooray;
It ain't to wake the world up at the break-
of the day;
It's just because I'm happy, an' I'm feelin'
that-a-way
That I holler like a looney in the mornin'

It ain't because the crops are in an' growin'
in the rains;
I ain't got out my pencil an' a-figgerin' my
gains;
It's because the kids are happy and a-
weavin' daisy chains,
That I holler like a looney in the mornin'

I holler 'cause I'm happy with the thinkin'
of every day,
I holler 'cause old trouble goes around the
other way;

It's just to please the babies rompin' happy
at their play
That I holler like a looney in the mornin'.

That's why I holler mornin's when I'm out
a-hoein' corn,
Till my voice wakes the crossways like the
tootin' of a horn,
To set the echoes chucklin' just as soon as
they are born
That I holler like a looney in the mornin'.

To set the echoes rollin'; 'tain't to please
nobody but
A little bit o' mother in a little bit o' hut
With her little bits o' babies, to lighten up
the rut,
That I holler like a looney in the mornin'.

POOR SANTA CLAUS

I HAVE always had a notion I wished I
was Santa Claus,
I have always had a notion I would like
to be, because
It would be such fun a-goin' down the
chimneys all around,
Tiptoein' into bedrooms, stoppin' at each
little sound,
With my ears pricked up to listen for the
little fellers' tread,
Peekin' out between the curtains, peekin'
into each wee bed,
Harkin' to the talk of daytimes of each
eager little tyke,
An' then, Christmas, fetchin' to 'em all the
pretty things they like.

I have always had a notion I would like to
get his mail,
And read every little letter till the stars got
dim and pale
Every morning. I imagine he gets just the
quaintest pile
Of wee notes that it's no wonder that he
always wears a smile;
But I've also got a notion, just a sort of
faint surmise,
I can see a little sorrow 'way back in his
laughin' eyes;
An' it's that there look of sorrow gets me
feelin' glad because
I am only me, and do not have to be a
Santa Claus.

I'm a fool! For when the presents had been
scattered everywhere,
And been clasped to breasts of babies with
night's tangles in their hair,
When 'twas the day after Christmas, the
morn after Christmas morn,
With the glad girls with their dollies, with
the boys each with a horn,

With the sun a-shinin' brightly, an' with
glorious New Year's day
Seemin' to wait for us laughin' only just a
week away,
I would turn from it a-sighin', put my
empty knapsack by,
An' wish I could take my smile off an' go
off somewhere an' cry.

Cry for letters all unanswered, cry for
stockings all unfilled,
For child voices raised in hoping, now in
disappointment stilled,
I should want to go off somewhere by my
lonesome just to grieve
For the little bits o' stockings hanging
empty Christmas Eve,
That would hang empty and cheerless by
the cold grate in the morn
When with joy the world was ringing and
the Christmas day was born;
I would feel bad for the babies with their
little cheeks tear-wet,
Standin' grievin' Christmas mornin', think-
in' Santa could forget.

I am glad that I'm not Santa, glad that I
don't have to be;
There won't be no little babies Christmas
morning blamin' me
'Cause their little baby stockings were all
empty in the light
Of the morning, that were hung up filled
with hoping over night;
I can feel bad and be grievin' all of Christ-
mas Day because
Of the disappointed babies without being
Santa Claus;
An' if I was him I reckon I could never
play the part,
For the thought of them I couldn't ever
reach would break my heart.

BERENICE

NEW roses, red roses; so graceful, so tall
That a little girl's head could not top
them at all;
So red! as the heart of all color has sped
To love them and hold them and make
them so red;
So fragrant, the fragrance of every known
bloom,
The soul of all flowers seems in their per-
fume;
Toned down, made exquisite, made fitting
for you.
And so they come to you, and sparkling
with dew
To make glad your day, make your birth-
day more sweet,
And carpet the day with their leaves for
your feet.

What would the world be with no red
roses tall,
Nor birds in the trees by the wayside, to
call
“Good morning,” each morning, to greet
the glad sun,
To let the world know a new day was
begun;
A day of warm sunshine, as yellow as gold;
A day of red blossoms, dew-laden, to hold;
A day of glad brooks that go laughing
along;
A new day, a glad day, a day brimmed
with song?
What would the world be, robbed of
blossoms and dew?
And what would life be in a world robbed
of you?

A world robbed forever, forever of you;
The smile on your lips, in your soul, in the
blue
Of your eyes. There are times when
living's a task,

When we drop to our knees, and fear, and
we ask
For rest, only rest! Just to sleep, and for
long!
Eyes shut to red roses, ears closed to the
song
Of birds in the trees! Then your laugh's in
the hall;
Your laugh at the weight of the world; and
your call.
We straighten and square for the task
that's to do;
And laugh. But our laugh is the courage
of you.

THOUGHT OF RESTING

I CAN shut my eyes and hear it, hear the
river calling, calling;
And can hear the rustling rushes in the
shallows by the brink,
And, below, I hear the torrent in its leaping
and its falling,
And, above, the spreading rapids where
the cattle come to drink;
And the apple trees are laden with their
red, red globes and golden,
And I see the fellows playing as they
used to play with me,
And the amber colored sunshine, as in
merry days and olden,
Comes like largess flung from heaven
through the branches of the tree.

Comes like largess flung from heaven, and
I sigh where I am sitting
With the autumn all about me, for
there's silver on my hair,
And my heart calls to the shadows of the
old days round me flitting,
And my ears hark for a hailing that
comes not from anywhere;
Oh, heigh-oh, I'm old; I'm leaning like the
trees my father, felling
In the forests 'way off yonder, in the
sunny lands and good,
Brought to earth; and in my bosom there's
a voice insistent telling
I am marked for early resting like the
old trees in the wood.

It is good, the thought of resting, it is good,
the thought of going
'Way out yonder where the voices of
the old days call to me;
For methinks I'll hear the laughter of the
old days, and the blowing
Of old springtime-laden breezes through
the blossom-laden tree;

And I'll lay by as a garment this old husk
of my soul's fretting,
And I'll set out on the journey with a
lilting soul and free,
And they'll run, I know, to meet me for
their souls know no forgetting,
And we'll laugh and talk and chatter
like the boys we used to be.

AT THE SINKING OF THE SUN

ARE you happy with the happiness
That none but daddies know?
In your singing repertoire
Have you got a by-o-lo?
Can you sit still in the evening
And hear the glad pit-a-pat
Of the bare feet of a baby
Hunting where its daddy's at,
Till it finds you sitting lonely
And climbs up onto your knee
In its nightie, just as happy
As a baby ought to be?
If you haven't got this pleasure
At the sinking of the sun
You have missed a lot of happiness,
You're out a lot of fun.

If you haven't got a baby
 You can tousle on the floor
Till its mother says: "Be careful,"
 And the baby gasps for more,
If you haven't got a baby
 That will ride a-pick-a-pack
Hanging to your ears or whiskers
 While it sits astride your back,
If you haven't got a baby
 That will urge you up the stairs,
That will fairly shake with chuckles
 When you hurdle over chairs
You may think your life worth living,
 But you'll know before its done
You've been running on a side-track
 And have missed a pile of fun.

It's a little bit of baby
 At the end of every day,
It's a little bit of baby
 With its little baby way
Climbing to the knees of daddy
 With its little baby charms,
With its mouth a-pout for kisses,
 With its dimpled, necklaced arms,

Makes the jolts and jars of living,
All the worries that annoy;
Just the way that leads to gladness,
Just the way that leads to joy;
And you'll bear them never thinking
Till the working day is done,
For the night-time "Now-I-lay-me,"
And the scrambling and the fun.

IN THE MORNING

JUST a happy, childish treble, lifting,
 lilting down the way;
Just a burst of happy laughter where the
 little children play;
Just a squeal, and then a man's voice, in a
 laughing: "Upseday!"
Just some little babies playing in the
 morning.

Just a father with his children swinging in
 an old rope swing,
Swinging high to feel the pleasure of their
 little hands a-cling;
How their voices lilt and gurgle, how their
 happy accents ring;
Just some little babies playing in the
 morning.

Just an earth-floored, cozy playground
'neath a gnarly liveoak tree;
Just some little folks pretending they have
got some friends to tea;
Just some brown-eyed, blue-eyed babies
dignified as they can be;
Just some little babies playing in the
morning.

Just a something good to live for; just a
balm for every smart,
Just wee baby hands, all dimpled, shaping
up a fellow's heart;
Just a dad a-stoop for kisses when the time
had come to part;
Just some little babies playing in the
morning.

Just one more strong push together, one
more cry of: "Upseday!"
Then the place is all deserted where the
little children play;
They are at the gate and throwing daddy-
kisses down the way;
Just some little babies playing in the
morning.

TENDER-SWEET

IF you use a little lovin' and you use a
little song,
You will find your world is never gonna go
so very wrong;
If you spread a little kindness on the other
man's distress,
If you use a little sweetness and a little
tenderness,
If you stoop some times to sort of lift
another feller's load,
If you do a little dance-step as you go along
the road,
You will find that all of these things you
have found the time to do
In some happy form or other will come
laughin' back at you.

That's a pretty good religion; that's the
kind the Master tried;
He just chose a way of kindness and of
sweetness, and He died
Hanging on the rough spikes, piercing
through His tender hands and feet,
And through all that He had suffered still
His smile was tender-sweet;
And the way His hurt feet walked in is an
open way to you,
But no spikes await you in it; and each
tender thing you do
To the fellows all about you in the way you
go along,
Will come back to you in laughin' and in
lovin' and in song.

HAS ANYBODY LOST TWO CATS?

HAS anybody lost two cats? Us hopes
nobody ain't,
Because two baby cats is here; and they
was thest as faint
As they could be when they first came to
our back yard that day,
And so us feeded them, we did, and they
won't go away;
But mamma says that they ain't not our
little cats, at all;
And so us hides them in the shed when
peoples comes to call,
And one of us stays there with them so's
they'll be sure an' stay,
And does not let them out until the callers
goes away.

And when it's me I hold them tight, and
 peek out through a crack
And watch them till they go away and hope
 they won't come back;
My mamma says that probably nobody
 wants them much,
She says there is so many cats nobody cares
 for such;
But us tells her us cares for cats, at least-
 ways for these two,
Us don't think no one cares for cats as
 much as usses do;
For these is speshul kinds of cats, and they
 can almost sing,
And they've got whiskers and a tail and
 legs, and ever'thing!

Our mamma says that maybe someone had
 these cats, and they
Did not want these and took them in a bag
 an' come away
And putted them in our yard; and my
 mamma says that she
Would like to have my father catch them
 doin' that, they'd see!

And she seems kind of fussy, but the cats
don't seem to mind,
And usses thinks whoever left them here
was very kind;
And the cats both is fat, and goes with us
'most ever'where,
And both their tails sticks right straight up
from them into the air.

I wish I had a million cats, an' sister wishes,
too;
Us has had these cats quite a while, and
they are good as new!
And fatter than when they first come; if
we'd a million we
Would give them milkman's milk till they
were fat as they could be,
And we would train them till they would
go with us everywhere—
A million—with a million tails stuck right
up in the air.
These is our cats! Now, ain't they fat?
An' ain't they long an' wide!
But 'scuse us someone's comin', an' us
gotta go an' hide.

TRYING TO EXPRESS IT

I COULD hop up on a twig
If I wasn't so dern big,
An' I wasn't so darn stout,
An' as homely as git-out,
An' just sing an' sing an' sing,
Sing out glad as everything;
Sometimes my soul seems to buzz
Like an auto's gizzard does,
Just for gladness! Swear I could!
Ain't the old world glad and good?

Ain't the old world glad and good,
Once you get it understood?
I ketch myself wishin' that
I could purr just like a cat;
I'm so glad sometimes I feel
Like a pig does; I could squeal,

I'm so glad! Skies are so blue,
Winds so sweet an' hearts so true,
That, I say—'f I wa'n't so big
I'd just hop up on a twig!

Sometimes, when things starts to rip
I just pinch my lower lip
'Twixt my fingers, this-away,
An' don't have a word to say;
Never open up my face;
Then, somewherees about the place
An old mocker lilts a tune
Sweeter than the soul of June.
And a fleck o' sunshine falls
On my patched old overalls.

Then the wind stirs in the trees;
And the hum o' honeybees
Comes to me; an' far away
Comes the smell of new-mown hay;
And the skys keeps gittin' blue
And someone yells: "Peek-a-boo!"
Or a baby, hid somewhere
Laughs, an' there ain't no more care;
And my glad soul starts to buzz
Like an auto's innards does.

'NOOKIE KNEW,

I WENT to ride with " 'Nookie," just the
other night, and she
Was about as wriggle-twisty as a little girl
could be;
For one moment she'd be sitting right
beside me on the seat,
And next moment she'd be up and dancing
gaily on her feet;
And, it seemed to me, just trying to spill
out into the road,
And I'd grab her and I'd tell her: "Sit
down there, you little toad!"
But she'd hop up in a moment with a gur-
gle-goo of glee,
And the mischief in her blue eyes would be
peeping out at me.

Then I tried to interest her, and asked, as
we went along,
If she was the little girl that I had heard
could sing a song;
And she tuned up in a moment, her song
was of "little feet,"
And she cautioned them "be tareful" and
her voice was mighty sweet;
And it rippled and it whispered, like the
night wind in the trees,
And was sweeter than the buzzing of the
laden honey-bees;
It flowed sweeter than the streamlet o'er its
sunlit pebbles flows;
But her feet were not too careful, for one
hit me on the nose!

Then I asked her when she'd finished, and
we'd had enough of that,
(Of the kicking, not the singing) Tell me:
"Have you got a cat?"
Don't tell me I'm not a wizard picking out
a subject! She
Turned the glory and the gladness of her
blue eyes onto me,

And she snuggled up and told me of a
mother-cat she had,
And the very talking of it seemed to make
her more than glad;
And she told me what she called her, and
she told me she was sweet,
And she said that when she teased her she
had stickers on her feet.

And then she spoke of the kittens, there
were four of them in all,
And they'd chase her through the parlor,
and romp with her in the hall;
And one of them was named "Stinny,"
and one "Fatty," and one "Pig,"
And the other, little bit of kitten that was
not so big,
Was named "Pussy-Foot," and always,
she said with her voice of song,
Or most always, when she went out all her
cats would go along;
And she'd hug them up tight to her, and
they'd sing—she meant they'd purr—
And what wouldn't sing I wonder snug-
gled in the arms of her!

Then I told her she was charming and I
whispered to her that
I was glad she had the kittens, glad she
had the mother-cat;
Then I asked her what the kittens had on
them; I questioned her
Wondering if she'd say hair, or, if she
knew and would say, "fur,"
And she clapped her hands, and gladness
shone out of her eyes of blue,
And I knew in that one moment, as she
looked up, that she knew!
And she caught me by the ears and stood
right up there on my knees,
And she rubbed her nose on my nose and
she told me they had "Fleas!"

AN INTERESTING DIZEEZ

IT ain't no fun this bein' sick and lyin'
here like this;
My mother says that I ain't got 'fantile
paralysis,
'Cause I can move my toes, and move my
fingers, this-a-way;
If I had it I'd lay right still in bed day
after day
An' couldn't even turn at all, and couldn't
move my toes,
And couldn't hold my handkerchief to help
me blow my nose;
It must be funny for a kid to be laid out
that flat;
I wonder why God goes and makes diseeziz
such as that?

My father, which is very smart, and reads
'most every night

Books with the longest words in them,
which he pernounces right,
Says folks are made like telephones, and
central is your head,
And everywhere through all of you the
nerves like wires is spread;
And this 'fantile paralysis which sometimes comes to town
Is like a storm which breaks the wires, and
mebby throws them down
So central can't communicate with fingers
or with toes,
Or legs or arms or anything, to tell them
how they goes.

My father he is very smart, and things is
like he said;
And my brain's like a little man a-settin'
in my head,
A-phonin' me the way to go, and to turn
out for chairs,
And phonin' my feet how to go when I
start for upstairs;
And this 'fantile paralysis is when the
wires is down,

Like that there last big storm we had
smashed them all over town
And made the phones go dead; I'm glad
that I have not got that!
It's tough enough to be plain sick and
lyin' where I'm at.

Since God has made us that-a-way he otto
made some men,
Some teentsy men with climbers on, to
make us well again;
They could come climbin' up our legs, and
climb in through our ears,
And fix our wires so we would not have
that dizeez for years;
And when they got us fixed one could call
from our little toe,
To Central 'way up in our head, and say,
"Hello! Hello!
Ring your bell, Central, till I see if this
here kid's all right"—
But I ain't got it; what I got's from green
plums et last night.

AT THE FARM

MY grandpa, he ain't got much hair except just by his ears,
And he has lived in this here world for years and years and years;
And he leans on the fence and smiles when he looks down at me,
He says I'm such a little girl as gran'ma used to be;
But it don't seem like grandmas could have been just little girls;
My grandma's face is wrinkled and she's got the whitest curls
I ever saw, but he showed me a picture of her, and
She was a little girl and had a gold ring on her hand.

The picture is on glass, and it's in a gold
velvet frame,
And grandpa said it was—I guess I can not
say the name,
But it was an old-fashioned kind they
made when he was small;
But I would not be proud of it if I had it
at all.
I've got a better picture of myself, as big
as me!
With yellow curls and with blue eyes, and
pretty like I be;
I'm glad that grandma is growed up, and
grandpa growed up, too,
I could not love them quite so much if
they was both so new.

Folks get more kind as they get old; my
grandpa is so kind
That chickens, colts and calves and pigs
all lag along behind
When he walks out around the place; and
on one warm day he
Was feelin' sleepy so he sat down by an
ellum tree

And went to sleep; he says he just stopped
for a little nap,
And Molly's colt loved him so much it laid
down in his lap!
And when he woke and hollered the colt
stepped on him, and he
Had to send for a doctor and he had an
awful knee.

But he's all right again, and laughs, and
says he'll have some chap
Kodak him sometime with a horse a-settin'
on his lap;
And then he lifts me up and we go where
red clover grows
And bees are buzzin', and the smell's on
every breeze that blows;
And when he finds a great thick patch of
it he puts me down,
And says he don't know what he'll do when
I go back to town;
But I tell him not to feel bad, that when
I am away
I'll write him notes with kisses in and send
them every day.

WHEN BABE HOLLERS PEEK-A-BOO

WHEN babe hollers peek-a-boo, then
her mother's hiding, too, and her
grandma's peekin' through
Fingers interlaced;
And her grandpa ducks his head under-
neath the tablespread, and her happy
dad has fled—
Fled, in headlong haste,
For a nook just anywhere, underneath the
parlor stair, or beneath a near-by
chair,
Any kind of nook,
So it's not so far away as to keep him from
the play, and each one is hoping they
Will get the first look.

For when baby walks around, tippytoe
without a sound, till some hiding one
when found,

Loudly hollers: "Boo!"

Then there's doings at our shack when the
baby scuttles back, and your ear-
drums would 'most crack

With the loud halloo;

And she's caught and roundly kissed, dim-
pled chin and creasy wrist, rounded
cheek and chubby fist,

Kissed and kissed again;

Everybody takes their toll, grandpa ducks
his shining poll, grandma whispers:
"Bless her soul!"

And she's happy then.

Of a sudden, though her: "Boo!" sends
them swiftly scuttling to some place
where they can peek through,

Watching every turn

Of the baby as she seeks, as she tippytoes
and peeks, starry eyes and rosy
cheeks;

He would need be stern

Who could sit unmoved through all, hide
and seek, and find and call, who her
happy childish thrall
Could not, would not feel;
When a human gets too old, too self-cen-
tered or too cold, to a babe's form
long to hold,
Or enjoy its squeal,

Then it's time for him to hie out, far out,
beneath the sky, where white clouds
and wild birds fly,
Knowing woe nor ruth,
And lie close to nature's breast, just to
feel her moods, and rest by the sum-
mer winds caressed
And renew his youth;
Get afar from gold and bonds, out among
the swaying fronds of cool ferns by
shady ponds,
Till he feels a tug
Of old nature at his heart, causing it to
bound and start, causing it to long
and smart,
For a babe to hug.

IN THE NIGHT

A MOCKING BIRD waked me up last night;
He was perchin' out where the moon was bright.
An' I think a mockin' bird must have sung
That kind of a song when the world was young,
An' the trees was young, and the hills, an'
streams,
An' love was young with its laughs an'
dreams;
He waked me up with the overflow
From his joyous heart; an' I didn't know
What it was that roused me, at first, an' I
Tried to settle back with a drowsy sigh.

But would he let me? No sir! his call
Came through the window, and hit the wall,

Went through the door, and went down
the stair,
An' into all of the corners, where
No music ever had been before;
Then he sung louder, an' sung some more;
An' I waked up, an' I thought, "Gee whiz!
He's a stemwinder, that feller is!"
An' I left the bed, an' pulled a chair
Before the winder, an' sot me there.

I sot right there for the better part
Of the night, whilst he spilled out his heart;
The world was asleep; all the winders dark,
An' there wasn't no one but me to hark;
An' the poplars stuck up ag'in' the sky,
An' the moon was big as a homemade pie,
An' I was a-hearin' a concert worth—
Why, there ain't no tellin'! No one on
earth,
Not Tetrazzini, could sing like that;
So I drinked it in, and sat and sat.

An' there was a song of the long ago,
An' a little boy with a stonebruised toe,
An' a river-road, an' a windin' stream,

An' a covered bridge, an' a boyish dream,
An' a wispy girl with blue eyes ashine,
An' two names were carved on a tall old
pine;

An' there was glee, an' a world o' hope,
Then a wee grave on a sun-warmed slope,
An' then an ache, an' a broken heart,
An' a pain so keen that tears would start.

Then in the tune I heard him sing,
The world and life seemed a little thing;
I seemed so little I swept along
Up, up, up, up, on a gust of song;
The world grew little, an' off as far—
Far as the littlest, tiniest star;
Life's sorrows dwindled an' faded, too,
Heaven was near an' the skies was blue;—
The song died down to a little cheep,
An' mornin' found me right there, asleep.

BACK TO REALITIES

WHEN the new moon is round, an'
gold as a new pat o' butter;
An' candlebugs are doin' stunts, and black
bats flutter-flutter
Into the porch an' out again, an' there's a
far off mooin'
Of cattle in the medder-lot, then there ain't
nothin' doin'
If you are settin' all alone, but jest to go
a-dreamin'
Of walks jest wide enough for two, an'
silver ripples gleamin'
As they come rushin' to the shore with
the night breezes after,
Like happy kids would, an' bust there with
little lilts o' laughter.

There's nothin' doin' then, but jest to sort
o' set an' listen

Back in the shadders where the big moon-
flowers nod an' glisten;
An' pretty soon, away far-off, you'll hear
glad hoofbeats drummin',
An' by the feelin' in your heart you'll
know the dreams are comin';
An' you will go to meet 'em, an' come with
them through the flowing
Clear waters at the ford, an' go wherever
they are going—
You would not let the dreams go past an'
go their ways without you—
An' first you know, the shapes o' dreams
are dancin' all about you.

One is the boy you chummed with when
life's paths were all before you;
Jest harum-scarum boyish chums, with
blue skies archin' o'er you;
An' you loved one another, too, but he
stopped way back yonder,
An' in amongst your dreams you sit with
a hurt heart, and ponder
The question you oft ask yourself, you with
the years grown mellow,

If he, beyond the farthest star, is still the
little fellow
You used to know an' love, or if he's still
been growin', growin',
So that your wrinkles an' gray hair won't
put you past his knowin'.

An' then a laugh within the house, a glee-
ful pitter-patter,
An' rushin' little white-robed forms send
all your dreams a-scatter!
An' babies romp onto your knees, to say
their, "Now I lay me,"
An' all the thin dream shapes are gone;
and fades out laughin' Jamie,
The comrade of your boyish pranks, an'
you are left a-holdin'
A bunch o' babies that care not for fumin'
or for scoldin';
Because they know it's all a joke. Dreams
of old days are pleasin',
But laughin', lovin' babies are far better
worth one's squeezin'.

BACK AGAIN FOR ME

I THINK I'd best pack up my duds and
tell the town good-by,
And leave the pall of smoke behind; and,
out beneath the sky,
Go off along the country road, the wind-
ing road I know,
I came along so bravely just a little year
ago;
Go back to the broad meadow, to the call-
ing of the stream,
The little room beneath the eaves in which
I used to dream,
The birdsong of a morning, and the sweet
scent of the pine,
And all the joys that wait out there for me
to call them mine.

The smoke's so dark above me that I can
not see the stars;
I want to see the cattle stand a-callin' at
the bars;
I want to wake at morning with the old
familiar sounds,
And not the slammin', bangin' as the milk-
man makes his rounds;
I want the smell of clover makin' all the
noonday sweet;
I am weary, weary, weary of the clinging
asphalt street,
And I will be more happy than I was a
year ago
If I can walk at starlight with a maid I
used to know.

The city girls are diff'rent, they are thin
and ground by toil;
They are weary every evening of the day-
long stress and moil;
Their poor cheeks are so hollow, and their
eyes such somber wells—
Oh, I'm bound to leave the city, and its
reeking shops and hells!

And I'm goin' to the country where the
fields are wide and green,
And no smoke-clouds hide the heavens,
and the winds are cool and clean,
And the girls are plump and happy, with
their hair in ribbon-bows,
And they dimple into laughter, and their
cheeks are like the rose.

I have had my year-long lesson, and it's
back again for me!
To the gladness of the hill-tops, to the
spring beneath the tree;
To the high blue sky at noontime; and at
night the blinking stars,
And the cattle standing calling, in the
evenin' by the bars;
I've had my fill of the city, and I want the
clover-bloom,
And the winding country highway, and the
honeybee's ba-zoom;
I will trade the mighty city, with its shops
and streets aglow,
For the glinting eyes and laughter of a
country girl I know.

CLIMBERS

THE road gits ruther warmish an' it's
climbin' all the time;
But we ought to be a-thankin' God we've
got the strength to climb;
When there's boulders in the pathway that
we have to work around,
When we've passed a bit o' goin' that we
feared would get us downed,
When the slippin' an' the slidin' of the
slopes are passed and by,
We should sing a song o' gladness that we
had the heart to try;
'Course the road was steep and warmish,
an' we had to climb an' crawl,
But the road goes always upward that leads
anywhere at all.

Course the grime an' sweat of climbin' an'
the weariness was great;
Course we sometimes felt the longin' to
set in the shade an' wait
Till the gentle evenin' breezes brought a
coolness to our cheek;
But if we're amongst the winners, we kept
pluggin' at the peak
Till it kept a-growin' nearer, an', almost
before we knew,
We was reachin' for the blossoms that
stood out ag'in the blue,
We was settin' in the shadow listenin'
to the gentle croon
Of the wild birds, an' a-breathin' in the
sweet perfume o' June.

If you're on the road a-climbin', or have
reached the very top—
But you haven't—thank the Maker there
ain't any place to stop;
If you lived through all the ages there
would still be heights to climb;
There would be a little something that
you could do all the time;

There would be a weaker brother who must
tote a bigger load;
There might be a weaker sister who was
laggin' in the road;
It might be just a wee baby separated from
its dad,
Waitin' for your arms to squeeze it, an'
your kiss to make it glad.

So, however dust is blowin', so, however
steep the ways,
Though the road gits ruther warmish in the
peltin' of the rays,
If you keep head up, eyes forward, to the
line ag'in the skies
You will find the perspiration will not run
into your eyes;
If you slow up to be helpin' someone else
to make the climb,
You won't notice the road's roughness nor
its danger, half the time;
And the joy of every boulder you climb
over, by and by
Will keep you a-thankin' Heaven that you
had the strength to try.

THE HILLS

THERE'S nothing so good as the hill-tops that rise
Till they're covered with snow and tints of the skies
Lie on 'em; there's nothin' so good as they are!
I look o'er the miles to the hills where they are,
Like sentinels standin' ag'in' the blue skies,
And hot tears of longin' well into my eyes.
The hills! oh, the hills, with their summits of snow!
Their scars and their chasms I never may know;
And God's in the mountains! His voice is the tone
Of torrents down tearing by shoulder and stone.

The hills! Oh, the hills! The snow-capped
hills for mine!
The bare rocky peaks far above the last
pine!
The white virgin snow where no man ever
trod!
The peaks and the silences vibrant of God!
Above all the toil and the stress and the
strife,
The petty small threads that are woven in
life,
The sorrow and heartache, the stress and
the care,
The ages-old woman with grey in her hair
Who begs on the corner, the bandit who
lurks
To spoil of his earnings his fellow who
works.

The hills! Oh, the hills, with their mantles
of snow!
Their heaven-born winds and their tor-
rents that flow
And call through the silence uproarious
and far,

And fling around boulder and barrier and
bar,
Until they go laughing and careless and
free
Down smooth level highways that lead to
the sea;
The hills are all white and the hills are
all clean,
And only the valleys and lowlands are
mean;
The hills are God's highways; man walks
on the plain,
An atom, soul-shackled, bowed down in
his chain.

And yet, if I could would I leave it and go,
Climb up to the hills from the valleys be-
low,
Climb up to the silences, icy and vast,
Leave men I have fought with, the men I
have passed
With laughter and hail as we journeyed
along,
The beggar I helped with a lilt and a song,

The beggar below on the corner, whose
eyes
Unseeing, seem always to gaze on the
skies?
Leave the toil and the strife, the resting
and glee?
No! the hills are for God; the valleys for
me!

THE BABY WHO ROMPED WITH DAD

O H, little girl, with the braids grown
long,

And the laughing lips and heart of song,
And the slim cool hands, each night you
wait

As you once did by the arbored gate,
But when your daddy turns in the street
No more you scamper on dancing feet,
With wind-blown curls, and your arms
out, so,

As you did ever so long ago.

Now you stand waiting him, tall and
and straight

And self-possessed; and you swing the
gate

To let him through, and you tippytoe
For his kiss, and arm in arm you go

Up the long walk where the red rose bends,
Each rose on its stalk and you are friends,
You smile at the world, and it looks glad;
But where is the baby who romped with
dad?

Where is the babe with her rush and shout,
Her hair blown wild, and her arms held
out;

With the wee hurt where she slipped and
fell

Which but the kiss of her dad made well?
She stands wide-eyed with her lips apart,
Her hands clasped over her fluttered heart;
With fluffy curls in a shining strand,
And gazes into the grown-up land.

And just last evening a tall youth stood
By the gate with her; the distant wood
Shone green and gold in the setting sun;
A bird in its shady depths, just one,
Trilled a low note to departing day;
She stood and watched when he turned
away;

Then ran, arms wide, where her father
smiled,

And clung to him like a little child.

He knew; and, knowing, his eyes grew
dim,

How much that loving was meant for him;
That night he stood by her snowy bed
As she slept, one arm 'neath her little head,
And thought long thoughts, and his heart
was sad

For the wee girl who had run to dad
With a glad shout on those far off nights,
For kiss-healed bruises and pillow-fights.

A SYMPHONY IN THE MAKING

GOD is planning greater wonders, as a
player o'er the keys,
Going thoughtfully and slowly brings the
world new melodies,
As a dreamer, eyes before him, through
starvation, hurt, and ruth,
Brings his dream where men may grasp it,
hold it, know it for the truth,
God is picking through the ages from the
hearts of vibrant strings
Things but yesterday unthought of, what
to-day are undreamed things;
And the world grows ever better, cries
grow fainter, die away,
As the eyes of stumbling mortals catch
the dawning of the day.

As musicians build their music, toning,
 cutting out discord,
So the work goes on forever in the work-
 shop of the Lord;
The whole universe His keyboard, planets
 far beyond our ken
And beyond them other planets, and then
 more as far again,
And, twice farther, other planets; each has
 some place in the score;
Though the throbbing comes but faintly, if
 we listen more and more,
If we tune our ears to catch it, it shall come
 near and more near:
If our hearts are kept unsullied and we
 hearken we shall hear.

Till in time all men shall hear it come tri-
 umphant to their ears,
Through the interstellar spaces catch the
 music of the spheres;
And the weeping of the children, and the
 grieving of the sad,
And the moan of those who hunger, and
 the growl of men made mad

By the grinding and the squeezing of the
cruel hands of greed
Shall be hushed to catch the music; and
whatever god or creed
Men may have, if they but labor with their
eyes turned to the dawn
They shall step forth into glory when the
darker days are gone.

Those who trample on their passions, turn
their backs on lust and greed;
Men who turn to help a brother who is
crying in his need;
Men who help to take the babies from the
spindle and the loom
To wide fields where summer breezes stir
the blossoms to perfume;
Men who govern them with loving, who
protect the baby limbs
From the thoughtless blow are helping
shape the gladdest of God's hymns;
They are teaching love, are treading where
the spike-pierced feet have trod;
They are helpers to the Master; they're in
partnership with God.

And it all shall roll together, throb together, reach above,
Up to where the Great Musician with more than men know of love
Lets his hands glide o'er the keyboard till he finds the sought-for tune
Sweeter than the smell and gladness of ten million years of June;
And men, soul attuned, shall hear it coming faintly to their ears;
Though the very sweetness of it may suffice their eyes with tears,
Yet the tears shall be of gladness, gushing from long hidden springs;
Love, just love, may touch the keyboard, love, just love, vibrate the strings.

A SIGN

THE work ain't goin' so good, some-how,

I heard a whistle an' looked just now,
An'—well, I pushed all my work aside;
The city's streets were as big an' wide
As the prairies were, an' buildings tall
Had dwindled till they wa'n't there at all;
The magic of it was something queer
For, for the moment I was not here.

I turned my head when I heard the sound,
And my eyes lit, an' I looked around,
An' after searchin' I seen him there,
With a sunburned neck an' brick-dust hair,
An' his smudgy face, an' freckled nose,
An' his ragged pants, an' eager pose,
With his eyes alight, and feet apart—
I loved him so it most hurt my heart.

He held his fingers up, this-a-way,
Like I held my fingers yesterday,
Just held them up, like two rabbit ears,
And them an' the whistle knocked the
years

Plum off of me; as they slipped aside
I was a kid, an' as eager-eyed
As the kid there on the corner was;
It hits folks funny, remembrance does.

As I stepped out of the years ag'in,
With a boyish heart an' face a-grin,
I stuffed my fingers into my mouth
And the soft wind from the blossomed
south

Caught my call, shrill as it used to be,
An' Redhead heard it an' looked at me;
I raised two fingers an' signed to him
That I'd play hooky an' go an' swim.

And then the boy in the ragged clothes
Stuck his small thumb 'gainst his snubby
nose,

An' wiggled his fingers, so; an' you
Can bet I knew what that sign meant, too;

An' then he stuck out his tongue, he did,
The derned little, redhead, smudge-faced
kid!

And then the city came back once more,
With all its rattle and rush and roar.

And years came back as he turned away,
And work came back, and the streaks of
gray

Came back again in my thinning hair;
I looked again and he wasn't there,
The redhead kid with the sign I knew,
That meant: "Go swimmin'?" to me an'
you

When we was kids, but that sign an' smile
Had made me glad for a little while.

LUCK, THAT'S ALL

IT ain't good sense to raise your head an'
tell what you would do
If things that's happened to your friends
would happen-up to you;
It ain't good sense to scorn another feller
if he falls,
There ain't no tellin' what you'll do if the
fool-killer calls;
An' if a feller strays aside into a crooked
way
You oughtn't point him out at all, nor have
a word to say;
You ought to thank your lucky stars it
wa'n't you jumped the track,
An' give the other chap a lift an' try to
coax him back.

For when it comes to stubbin' toes the last
word's never said,

An' no man can be sure he's safe until he's
safely dead;
Nobody wants to leave the straight to go
the crooked way;
There wasn't ever anyone that pined to
go astray;
Some fellers can't go head held up an' lilt
a bit o' song
An' laugh temptation down the wind;
some fellers ain't so strong,
Perhaps, as you have proved yourself; but,
when the best is said,
You ain't so sure you're strong yourself
until you're safe an' dead.

That's why you ought to, when you run
across a derelict,
Someone whose life is full of falls, whose
soul is scarred and nicked,
Go up an' slap him on the back and give
him howdy-do,
An' thank the God that made you both the
falls were not for you;
For he was weak where you are strong;
be tender when you speak,

For everybody's coat of mail has got a spot
 that's weak;
An' that yours hasn't been found out don't
 prove it can't be struck;
The only thing it proves at all is that you've
 been in luck.

ALL OF THE TIME

ALL of this life is a lovable joke;
Sleep through it, eat through it, drink
through it, smoke,
Laugh through it, love through it, dance
through it, sing—
Any old way it's a lovable thing!
Walk through it, crawl through it, auto
along,
Ever and always it bubbles with song!

Always the sun on a hill or a tree,
Always a baby that gurgles with glee,
Always a mother a baby makes glad,
Always somewhere there's a home-coming
dad,
Always someone flings a beggar a dime—
Lovable, life is, and all of the time.

**Blind? There are songs filled with love for
your ears,**

**Heart notes which only the blinded one
hears.**

**Deaf? You can sing as you go down the
way,**

**Songs in your heart of the glad yesterday;
Loved ones about you to press to your
side—**

It's lovable, life, however you're tried.

**Deaf, dumb, and blind? There's a lovable
squeeze**

**The mortal who hears, who talks, and who
sees**

**Can't gauge the joy of, when it goes about
Your shoulders. You know your heart
gives a shout,**

**And throbs with a gladness that makes it
expand—**

A lovable life? All of it; and grand!

**Poor? Then God's pictures are hung on
the skies;**

**Hues of God's blossoms are free for your
eyes;**

Streams sing for you, and the night comes
with sleep—
You've not a vault to watch over and
keep—
You can laugh, love and sleep; romp, run,
and climb;
Lovable, life is, and all of the time!

GOOD FOR FARMERS

THIS mornin' when I milked the cow,
before I started off for town,
I had to take her by the horns an' tail an'
turn her upside down,
An' milk her that way; yes sirree! it's
rained so doggone much an' long
I've ordered me a submarine. I tell you
I'm a-gettin' strong
For sunshine an' for dusty roads an' things
like that, doggone the luck!
Why, I ain't got a rooster that ain't wishin'
he was hatched a duck;
An' mud? There's mud on everything!
There's mud on all my suits of clothes,
An' I have paddled 'round so much I'm
gettin' webs between my toes!
But what makes me more doggone mad
than anything makes me, I vow,

Is this here line of talk I hear: "This suits
you farmers, anyhow."

"This suits you farmers!" Do folks think
I'm runnin' me a frog-farm here,
Or raisin' waterlilies? Say, some folks'
idees are mighty queer!

Town folks think farmers got to have their
farms wet down so they can wade!

I wonder if folks think that I am raisin'
tadpoles for the trade?

If it keeps rainin' this-a-way a little longer,
garden truck

Won't do for me, I'll have to go to plantin'
eels, or buy a duck;

And have to trade my cows and horse and
all such things, it makes me fuss,

And go somewhere where I can get a herd
of hippopotamus.

The water is so doggone deep that all the
bull-frogs has been treed,

An' cattle has to ketch their breath and
dive to get a bit of feed.

An' wife can't get to go to town to shop,
an' the kid's eyes are full o' tears;
The water is so doggone deep the mules
are breathin' through their ears!
And still town folks say: "This is good for
people livin' on the farm."
That shows you how much sense they got!
I ain't a-wishin' them no harm,
Doggone their skins! but I would like to
have them here with me a spell,
An' make them help me do the chores;
they wouldn't think I fared so well
As they appear to think I do. Town folks
do have the queer idees!
I'm 'fraid I'll have to plant my corn up
in the crotches of the trees;
Why, just this mornin', 'fore I fixed to
hitch and to drive into town,
I had to swim to ketch the cow, and milk
the critter upside down!

HAPPY HEART

M AIDEN, with the parasol,
Maiden, with the lilting call,
Maiden, with the graceful poise,
Maid with all of the glad world's joys
Bubbling in your heart until
Laughter seems to overspill
From your eyes in glinting glee,
You're a world of joy to me!

Yes you are! Your glinting eye
As you daily pass me by,
Drifting light as thistle-down,
Seems to light up the old town;
And the gladness of your smile
Makes all work and life worth while.
Just your glee and youth and grace
Make the world a gladsome place.

Roses red and glories blue,
They were all contrived for you;
If I were a honey-bee,
Don't you know, it seems to me
I would dare death for a sip
At your curved mischievous lip;
Being but an old man, I
Merely watch you drifting by.

What can people care at all
For the mocker's lilting call?
If God blessed me with a choice
I would always hear your voice
Lilting happily and free;
That would be enough for me.
All the joy life ever knew
Bubbles in the heart of you.

THOSE OLD DAYS BENEATH THE BOUGHS

SAY, do you recall the rock in the torrent where you played
When a little bit o' boy? How the sycamore's wide shade
Covered it an' made it cool in th' hottest kind o' day,
How you used to, sprawled on it, let vacations drift away?
How you builded castles tall that reached almost to the blue?
But let's not recall the dreams, for so few of them came true;
Let us not recall the dreams, far too grand for you and me,
Let us only just go back to the days that used to be;

They were fairer than our dreams ever
could be, ever were.

Those old days beneath the boughs where
the branches used to stir.

Did you ever catch the crab, the big one
that used to dwell

Underneath the sloping side of the rock
you loved so well?

Have you ever gathered berries that half
way could compare

With the red, luscious berries that you
gathered 'way back there

On the slope above the stream, berries big
an' wet with dew?

Do you ever taste a fruit whose rare flavor
brings to you

Like a movin' picture scene, all the joys
you used to know,

The big rock above the stream where you
used to love to go,

An' the laughter of the boys 'way back
there with whom you played,

An' almost knee-deep shallows where you
used to love to wade?

Where you used to fish for minnows while
waters used to swish,
And you would sit there breathless, fear-
ing lest you scare the fish;
It was fun to throw your duds on the rock
an' dare the tide,
Almost deep enough to swim, an' to splash
from side to side
Playing tag, splashing water in the other
fellows' eyes;
Do you ever, sitting lonely, when daylight
fades and dies
See the road go winding round up the hill
and far away
To the home that waited you at the end of
every day?
Is the home that waited you up and over
the big hill
Lost to you forever, is a strange foot upon
its sill?

And I wonder if you can, if you try, recall
once more
How you labored all one day till your
hands were bruised and sore

With a rock and a big nail, till you'd
graven big and deep
The initials of your name? Those initials
meant a heap
To the boy away back there, the glad boy
you used to be,
The wee boy who used to sprawl on the
rock beneath the tree;
Have you ever had a longin' to go back
where you were,
Where you carved your name that day,
where the branches used to stir?
If you have, don't you do it! Keep the
memory as fair
As it was when you were glad and a part
of it back there.

ALL WELL

BEFORE Bill upped an' married an'
left the old home farm
I'm 'fraid that I was most too strict; there
wasn't any harm,
I don't suppose, in lettin' him take Molly,
meetin' nights
An' take his sweetheart ridin', when the
rosy northern lights
Was lightin' up the heavens, an' the old
earth down below,
An' makin' rosy flickers on the heaps o'
drifted snow;
But I never let him take her, an' it used to
make him cross;
I reckon I thought 'most too much o' that
old Molly-hoss.

So—mother called him William, like the
most o' mothers will,

Though to me an' all the hired hands his
name was only Bill—
Bill went his way, an' I went mine, th' way
I'd made the start;
An' day by day an' year by year we growed
more far apart;
An' when he took his girl out for a snug-
glin' moonlight hike
Across the hills he didn't git the hoss that
he would like,
But mostly took a plow-hoss, just a heavy
pladdin' plug,
Although I know a plow-hoss takes one
safest through a hug.

An' now he's married. I declare! It's been
almost a year!
An' mother's settin' in the house, an' I'm
a-settin' here
An' feelin' sort of lonesome, sort of like
I'd missed the mark.
A-raisin' our one chicken—an' I'm headed
toardst the dark,
An' Bill'll get the farm some day, an' plow
the furrows, too,

Across the fields I used to plow an' tried
to plow so true;
I guess I thought too much of all the fields
I had to till,
An' too much of ol' Molly-hoss, an' skurce
enough o' Bill.

I oughter made a chum o' him, he can't
care fur his dad,
Or love me like he would've done, I reckon,
if I had;
I was plum wrong— Is that Bill's hoss
a-comin' down the hill!
Good heavens! Somethin's happened!
God! don't let it be to Bill!
Why, that's Bill's self a-drivin'—like his
coattails was afire!
Good gracious! Don't that youngster think
that hosses never tire?
What's that? You've got a baby! And
you've named it after me?
You did—why, Bill!—I didn't think—
I'm proud as I kin be!

GOING BACK

SOME day I'll fill up my pipe an' slip
into an old coat an' go
Until I come to a little town, a little old
town I know;
Where the dusty road winds round an'
down an' comes to a burblin' stream
An' trees 'way off on the distant hills are
touched by the sunset gleam
Until their green takes the hue of gold, an'
out of the distance still
Comes the faint note of the nightbird's
call, the plaint of the whippoorwill;
An' there I'll meet the friends I knew in
the days that are past an' gone;
The boys, they're ruther old boys today,
I met at the gates o' dawn.

There wasn't one in the old home town but
 who was as close as kin;
I never knocked at a door back there, I
 whistled an' went right in;
An' there were cookies, I taste them now,
 the mothers o' those days made;
They always kept them on hand for boys,
 an' there was a creek to wade,
An' barns an' lofts where a boy could romp
 an' put in a rainy day,
Or sneak a copy of Deadwood Dick to read
 on the smelly hay;
An' so I'm thinkin' I'll go back there, to
 the old home town sometime,
Where I know each song of the bouldered
 creek, an' there is a hill to climb.

An' I will slip off the train back there, an'
 mix with the old time crowd,
An' get my name in the paper, too; an'
 maybe I won't be proud!
That's been my aim for these many years,
 to get in the old home sheet;
"One of our home boys," it will say, an'
 each friend o' my youth I meet

Will say: "I seen you was back in town
in an editorial; say,
By jing, old feller, it seems to me you're
gettin' a little gray!"
An' that will be by way of a joke; I'll
laugh as I used to do;
But it ain't much of a joke, because I know
in my heart it's true.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

'T WERE fine upon these July nights
 to wander far away,
To leave the work and worry and the cares
 of every day,
To leave the town behind one and go out
 where winds are cool,
To where a tree throws shadows deep
 across a bayou pool,
And there lie prone upon the grass and
 watch the stars come out
Where only just the noises of the night
 are all about,
And candle-bugs flit all about, and frogs
 call from the pool
And all the wide world seems at peace, and
 all the world seems cool.

To just lie sprawled out on the grass and
hear the owl's to-whoo,
'Way out where not a city voice brings any
fret to you,
And all the world is sweet with peace, and
winds are in the trees,
And lullabies of old seem to come to you
on the breeze;
To lie there and to just forget that days
are full of toil,
That the tomorrow will come in with sweat
and rush and moil;
Forget the town, forget the toil, forget the
things to do,
And just imagine that the night and stars
were made for you.

Just hypnotize yourself; forget the price of
ham and eggs;
Sip lightly of life's brimming cup, forget
the bitter dregs;
Forget life's hurts, forget false friends, for-
get life's jolts and jars;
Just yield yourself to the cool night and let
it heal your scars;

Just put your hands behind your head and
dream of bygone days,
A little girl you knew of old, and old re-
membered ways;
And things she said, and things you said,
and how you held her hand,
And life seemed set to a sweet tune and all
the world seemed grand.

The city is a fearsome place; the city streets
are hot;
Go wander off across the dark, across the
meadow-lot,
And find a place no other one has found,
and watch the trees
Stand dark against the summer sky or
gently feel the breeze
And sway in rhythm to its song, and watch
the ripples flow
Beneath the stars right to your feet as in
the long ago
They used to flow, and feel again all the
old-time delights,
And then go back made strong, and armed
to fight a thousand fights.

MIRACLES

SOME folks make me tired! Their arguments

Is so derned lackin' any kind o' sense
That I can't argue with them! I won't try!
I wave 'em to one side an' pass 'em by.
If they'd confine themselves to politics—
But I git crosser than a pair o' sticks
When they knock at religion, an' they say:
"Why ain't there any miracles to-day?"

Why ain't there any miracles to-day!
When the sun rises can a feller say
That ain't a miracle? An' when the moon
Lights up the night, an' the air smells o'

June,

And all the world is bubblin' full o' love,
It makes me wonder what they're thinkin'
of!

An' when October comes an' paints the
trees!

If miracles are wanted what are these?

The mornin's an' the nights, the wavin'
trees,

The lights that lies on mountains, plains,
an' seas;

The bu'stin' buds o' spring, the changin'
fall,

The little streams a-singin', an' the call
Of birds, far-sent from some woodland re-
cess,

A father's love, a mother's tenderness,
The tall red cannas that dip down an'
sway—

And yet there ain't no miracle to-day!

And then we go a-tippytoe some morn
To where a little baby, newly born,
Is lyin' like a crumpled rose leaf lies,
As pink an' pure, an' in its vi'let eyes
A look of reminiscence of far things,
Of heaven-slopes an' of white angel-wings,

And things that we've been here till we've
forgot—

No miracles today! Who says there's not?

Why, every babe's a miracle, I know!
Two of 'em call me Daddy; when you go
An' stand beside a newborn baby's bed
Its eyes tight shut in sleep, its fluffy head
So light it hardly dents the piller, you
Are gazin' on a miracle; a few
Can't seem to see it, but it ain't unkind
To tell em' when they can't, by jing,
they're blind!

When a new baby, where it's lyin' at
Laughs in its sleep until it shakes its fat,
Just laughs an' laughs an' chuckles, don't
you s'pose

There's somethin' that that little baby
knows

That it ain't had no time to learn on earth,
That makes it shake its side for all its
worth?

There's miracles to burn, big ones an'
small,

But a new babe's the grandest one of all.

THE COVERED BRIDGE

THE new steel bridge across the crick's
a pritty thing to see,
As gauzy and as spidery as any bridge
could be;
It's floor's just like a solid road, cemented
good an' tight,
An' it's all painted red, an' it's a ruther
pritty sight;
But it don't have no charms fer me, don't
please me not at all;
The crick goes gurglin' just the same, an'
givin' the old call,
An' singin' comes along an' slips beneath
the river road;
But the new bridge ain't like the bridge,
the covered bridge we knowed.

We used to climb the slipp'ry rocks that led
up to the ridge,

An' stump each other divin' off o' that old
covered bridge;
I learned to swim in its cool shade in the
old swimmin' hole,
An' used to sit beneath it with my can o'
worms an' pole
An' fish fer pouts an' suckers, an' fer cats
th' hull day long,
Whilst all the time the crick went by a-sing-
in' of its song;
An' so the new bridge don't fill up the place
the old bridge did,
The covered bridge we romped in when I
was a little kid.

The covered bridge our voices went a-roll-
in', boomin' through,
Almost a-scarin' of ourselves each time we
hollered, "boo";
An' 'twas the dearest courtin' place that all
the country knew,
An' lovers walked from miles around to
meet an' bill an' coo
In its brown shadows, an' each day 'twas
dark enough, you wis

Fer two to pause, an' heart to heart,
exchange a lovin' kiss;
An' Maggie's name was carved in it with
my name, side by side;
I carved them there while she looked on,
the day she was a bride.

The day she was a bride—Oh, that was very
long ago!
Our children all played in its shade, an',
when the lights git low,
I hear their footsteps romp an' dance
across its soundin' floor,
An' hear the happy laughter of the ones
that come no more;
An' through its arches many times a slow
procession wound,
An' to the buryin' ground beyond, where,
each beneath a mound,
Our little children lie asleep beside their
ma. To me
The new bridge ain't so pritty as the old
bridge used to be.

THE OLD DIRT ROAD

O H, the old dirt path that was almost
overgrowned

With the grass and the bushes by the old
dirt road

That went windin' in an' out by the old
rail fence,

It's a-callin' to me now. It's a long time
sence

I have walked in the dust that was soft
to my feet,

Like a carpet o' velvet, an' night air so
sweet

Just breathin' it in was a everlastin' joy,
Just breathin' of it in, an' bein' just a boy!

Oh, the old dirt road! How it wound from
side to side!

'Twas just a narrow track, an' the world
was so wide

There was hardly no use for the old road
at all,
But the robins 'ud build, an' orioles 'ud
call
Along its twisty length where it wound in
an' out—
Once it turned by a pool that was plum
full of trout,
Once it turned in a field to a spring by
a tree;
Just an old dirt road, as contented as
could be.

A lazy, good-for-nothin' careless kind o'
road!
I can see it now, an' the weeds that over-
grew
Its edges, an' berries that in season 'ud
hang
From bushes in corners where wildbirds
hid an' sang—
See it like it wound, white an' misty 'neath
the stars,
Hear cattle callin' as they gether by the
bars!

I'm homesick to go to it! Homesick as
can be!—

It's always. forever, a-callin', callin' me.

HOW IT HAPPENED

I WOULDN'T have dasted ask her if I'd
stopped to think at all;
But the glory vines was climbin' in a riot
on the wall,
An' I had picked up Jones' boy, a little
an' barefoot tad,
An' had took him walkin' with me cause it
always made him glad.
For to have a grown-up notice him,
espeshly if 'twas me;
So we cantered off together. No one seein'
us would be
Ap' to think I was a bachelor, satisfied an'
plum resigned
To his state, an' knowed all over as the
woman-hatin' kind.

An' Tad trotted on beside me with his hand
hold of my hand,
His feet an' tongue a-goin', both of 'em, to
beat the band;
An' afore I was suspectin' it, the thought
snuck up on me
That when fellers without babies gits as
old as they can be,
An' ain't got no kin to love 'em, an' ain't
got no little kids
To hold in their arms an' croon to night-
times when the katydids
Is a-chirpin' in the thickets, an' the moon's
a-shinin' through
The tall trees, an' night-birds holler, what
in God's name do they do?

What in God's name do they do at all, an'
what can they be worth?
Just a clod, a bump on nature, just a-clut-
terin' the earth!
An' 'twas whilst I was a-thinkin' these
strange thoughts we come to where
She was standin', leanin' over the old ruint
wall; her hair

Sort of frazzled round her forrid, was a
golden sort o' fuzz;
An' her eyes was the same color that the
mornin' glories was;
An' she had Jones' little girl, Tad's sister,
along o' her,
An' was snugglin' her an' talkin' when we
come to where they were.

And we neither one said nothin', didn't
have a word to say,
An' the children went together for to git
us a bokay,
An' a bird away off somewhere sung
ka-hoot, ka-hoot, ka-hoot;
An' I stood a while a-lookin' at the worn
toe of my boot,
An' then I looked into her eyes an' looked
right away again,
An' after awhile when I looked back her
eyes was lookin' in
My eyes, an' then she looked away as
fluttered as she could be,
An' I heard my voice a-sayin': "Would
you marry up with me?"

An' then the pinkest rose-flush run all
across her neck, an' run
To her cheeks, like paints the apple on the
side that's near the sun,
An' her answer was just whispered, but it
raised me by the hair
An' set me down right in heaven where the
happy angels air!
An' I said: "I can't help wonderin' why a
girl as sweet as you
Has gone single?" An' a glimmer lighted
up her eyes o' blue,
An' we sorter leaned together, where the
mornin' glories climb,
An' she said: "'Twas your fault, Jasper,
but I knowed you'd ask sometime."

RAIN-WET

IT rained last night, and the whole wide world

Looks sweet and clean as it ought to be;
Like a baby bathed and dressed and curled,

And eyes a-glint with a baby's glee;
And pink and purple and azure blue

The morning glories look fresh and sweet;

And fresh red roses are wet with dew,
And grass is softer beneath the feet.

And everywhere, where a rainbow hit
A jasmine bud it has opened up,

And a gem lies at the heart of it;
And a gem lies in the lily's cup;

And trees look fresher and twice as cool,
And twice as green as they were last night,

And children wade in a wayside pool,
Splashing and shrieking in mad delight.

What a good old world! How clean and sweet

The busy old world is after all!
Its shaded paths coax our weary feet,
And every morning the mocker's call
Comes with the very first streaks of dawn,
With all the beauty the day-dawns hold,
And all the fears of the night are gone,
And the morning is azure and gold!

And babies lift as the glories do,
Their fresh sweet faces and nod and smile,

The grass is green and the skies are blue
And life is sweet and is well worth while;

Whatever fate may be holding back
The strength to bear it is given when
Fresh out of the night and storm and wrack

The world comes bringing its youth again.

The cattle low and the butterfly
Flies lazily past the blossoms sweet,

And perfumed breezes are drifting by
And bending daisies and meadow-sweet;
Whenever the tasks of life are done,
And our marching banners dipped and furled,
May that land past the westering sun
Look half as good as the rain-wet world.

SUGAR LUMPS

LET us go away off yonder down a path
that used to be,
'Way across the little footbridge, 'way
beyond the apple tree;
Skirt the hill the way we used to, skirt the
ruffled wayside pool,
With our books and slates and pencils, to
the little country school;
To the room with its long blackboards
where we labored every day,
To the yard where during recess boys and
girls played pull-away,
Or the girls, off in their corner, would play
prisoner's base, and run
Full of happiness and gladness, full of
laughter in the sun.

Let's go back to a far springtime where the
mellow sunlight shines,
To the little girls we loved then; who
inspired our valentines;
Girls whose locks were golden yellow, girls
whose eyes were cobalt blue,
Girls to whom we wrote in loving: "Sugar's
sweet and so are you."
Girls in pinafores and collars, starched and
clean as they could be,
Girls who 'way across the schoolroom used
to smile on you and me;
Let's go back, away back yonder, down
the paths we used to know,
To the "sugar lumps" we loved so in the
happy long ago.

You remember I am certain how our
hearts would throb and race,
How those days all of a sudden I began
to wash my face
And to keep it washed, and how you used
to comb and brush your hair,
And we scrubbed our necks until we were
the cleanest, pinkest pair

Of schoolboys in the whole village, and
 how father used to grin,
And the look that mother'd give us when
 we'd come a-marchin' in
With a flower pinned onto us. How she'd
 love and squeeze us two!
Oh, the girls away back yonder! Naught
 could cut our love in two!

Oh, the girls away back yonder! And the
 perforated scrolls
That each year took them our message;
 heaven bless their little souls!
Just the memory of their sweetness and
 the days that used to be
Makes that time away back yonder seem
 the best in life to me!
Years have stretched their length between
 us as the years are wont to do,
Severing the loves we used to swear no
 knife could cut in two;
But when springtime wakes the blossoms
 and warms up the out-of-doors
Memory goes back and snuggles by the
 girls in pinafores.

JUST GOIN' TO DAWDLE ALONG THE WAY

I AM goin' to laze along,
Pausin' to hark to every song
Of bird an' breeze an' brook an' tree,
An' every kind of minstrelsy
The world knows, an' sings; an' all
Of it, its littlest wee call
Will git response from me, an' I
Shall dawdle 'long beneath the sky;
Just like a feller waitin' till
Th' first call o' the whippoorwill
Tells him it's courtin' time; th' time
When life seems flowin' to a rhyme.

Goin' to wait like that I be,
Till your glad feet ketch up with me;
Till you, 'cross fields o' babyhood
An' youth an' truth, an' all that's good

Have come to me; have tripped along—
Just like the spirit of some song
Your mother used to sing to you
Had grew an' grew an' grew an' grew,
Until the song got so blamed small
It couldn't hold it in at all,
An' it had had to crystallize
Into a woman with glad eyes.

Had had to be a livin' thing!
A livin', breathin', sweet—By jing!
Th' promise of what you will be
Fills up this heart inside o' me
Till I feel like she's 'bout to bust!
An' then again I sort o' just
Wish you would stay a little girl;
With every little tousled curl
Just like it was; an' always glad
To snuggle in the arms of dad,
An' sigh, an' drop away to sleep
With him a-lovin' you a heap.

Heigh-oh! Oh-hum! My eyes gits dim
A-thinkin' things, an' over-brim
With tears; but men don't never cry—

It's prob'ly smoke. I wonder why
I wasn't took? Your ma would be
Ten times a better man than me
To bring a girl up; but I guess
God sort of knows His bizziness;
Men can earn more—I 'spose it's best—
Well, it's time that you was undressed
An' said your "lay me down to sleep—"
Dad's still here, lovin' you a heap.

THE LONG SWEET-SMELLING DAYS

THE ox-driver with his goad,
And the oxen with their load,
And the up-and-down and winding, dusty,
townward wending road,
And the bluejay on a rail
Switchin' of his sassy tail,
And a-scoldin' in a language that don't
never seem to fail.

And the whirrin' of the mill
Over yonder by the hill,
With the buzzin' of its sawin' sort of
minglin' with the rill,
Till afur it sort of seems
Like the singin' heard in dreams,
Like the liftin', ripplin', liltin' of the
dreamland bordered streams.

An' the long sweet-smellin' days
Bloomin' from a sort of haze
Every mornin', that drifts backward leavin'
 dewy country ways
Stretchin' far an' straight ahead,
Blossom bordered an' all spread
With dust-layin' dew, and softer than a
carpet to the tread.

An' I'm sorry till I frown
Thinkin' of the folks in town,
With their hurryin', worryin', an' rushin'
 up and down,
Glad to simply work and live;
Never knowin' when they've striv
Any gladness like the gladness that the
country ways can give.

I may never, never know
Nights o' jostlin' to an' fro
Where the theayters are crowded an' the
 streets are all aglow;
But I know of bush an' tree
 An' the heavens over me,
An' my happy red-cheeked babies make me
 glad as I can be.

MACHINE LIMITATIONS

I'D love to sit by this machine
And slowly touch the yielding keys,
Till the whole world should see the sheen
 Of Rocky River through the trees;
See the slate cliffs I used to know,
 And see the spider-webby span
Of the bridge known so long ago,
 Away back where my life began.

I'd love to take the world with me
 Across my white typewriter keys,
Until the whole wide world should see
 The things I see, feel the same breeze
Upon its cheek; should go and wade
 With me across the shallow ford;
And climb the cliff's face, unafraid,
 And drink with me from the old gourd.

The keys are unresponsive things!
 They never quite interpret right

The song that's in one's heart, and sings
 Its throbbing notes out to the night;
The song of youth and gladsome days,
 The song of blossomed slopes and bees,
The song of sumach bordered ways,
 And forest glades and shady trees.

They never can quite make the world
 See the rare color in the air—
As if the sunset banners furled
 Had left their sweetest colors there;
A color warm as sweetheart lips!
 A color holding all the gold
Of truant locks, pink as the tips
 Of little fingers known of old.

Let my stiff fingers stray across
 The iv'ry faces as they may,
I cannot make the branches toss,
 I cannot make the roses sway
The way I'd like the world to see,
 The way I'd like the world to know,
Or the whole world would sing with me
 Sweet love songs of the long ago.

A CASE O' CAN'T HELP IT

I T'S just a case o' can't help it with me,
By gee!

It's a case o' can't help it with me,
Whoopee!

When I see a tow-headed boy or a girl,
I feel like I'd like to just kiss every curl,
And grab 'em right up and just give 'em
a whirl;

It's a case o' can't help it with me!
It's a case o' can't help it with me,

By jing!

For it makes me feel glad as can be,
And sing?

My heart beats in ragtime! And hammers
around,

My feet do a rhythmical stunt on the
ground,

I feel I could grab 'em and waltz 'em
around!

It's a case o' can't help it with me!

A sweet tow-headed, glad, little girl,
Ah, me!

Or a boy! How they set me awhirl,
By gee!

I simply can't help it! I git full o' laugh,
I tell 'em hello, an' I joke an' I chaff,
I caper an' prance like a big yearlin' calf;
It's a case o' can't help it with me.

IF I HAD MY WAY

IF I had my way, and money to
Do all the things I should like to do,
I'd give a chuckle and laugh and shout
And wipe the orphan asylums out!
Each heart which craves for a baby boy,
Or little girl, with a throb of joy
Should get her wish and tight to her breast
Each one should clasp which she loved the
best;
An' croon songs to it when it grew late,
An' I would chuckle an' pay the freight.

There are lots who long for babies small,
To hear them patter along the hall;
Who walk sad-hearted and all alone,
Without a baby to call their own;
And that's where I would come in, by jing!
And orphan 'sylums would all go, bing!

I'd stoop and kiss every up-turned face,
An' leave that 'sylum the lonest place
That you ever knew, without the call
Of a laughin', rompin' babe at all!

Or, if I but had the money to
There's another thing I b'lieve I'd do—
I'd put them other folks on the shelf
An' mother the whole big bunch myself!
And days we'd romp, and would laugh and
play,
Out over the hills and far away;
An' nights I'd sit by a big grate fire
An' tell 'em tales whilst the flames went
higher;
An' pray to the Lord each soul to keep,
As fast as they snuggled down to sleep.

Till angel mothers peeped through the
night,
An' said: "He's got 'em an' they're all
right!"
And when they grew tired of romp and run
A tender woman should love each one,

An' when they waked in the morning blue,
All pink an' dimpled an' eager to
Get out an' run in a happy crowd,
I'd snuggle them till they laughed out loud;
An' they'd be glad as the bees that buzz,
An' 'ud never know what a spankin' was.

TOGETHER

THE sun shines as warm, and the world
is as young—
But we—we are older;
And sweet were the songs that the wild-
birds have sung,
But days have grown colder;
And bleak winds are swooping down out
of the skies,
Are swooping and blowing;
The red rose we loved is all wrecked, and
it lies
Where erst it was growing.

Once life was all youth, and bright red
was its mouth,
And pouting for kisses;
But now the sweet songsters have flown
away south;
One listens, but misses

The call of the mocker concealed in his tree,
The cardinal's calling;
A cold wind is blowing in off from the sea,
And shadows are falling.

Do you care? Are you sad that birds are
away;
Sad, dear one, and grieving?
Do you care that your locks are sprinkled
with gray?
That gold locks are leaving?
We have walked up the trail from glad
days of youth,
In hand and together;
Have laughed loud in glee at the shadow
of ruth;
Have laughed at the weather.

We have walked with a laugh where
blossoms are tall,
Hands clasped, through the meadows;
Have loved and have laughed, hand in
hand through it all;
Let's laugh at the shadows!

Let us romp as we did, our laughter be
clear,
For all the wind's blowing!
Death's the grandest venture of all, and
it's near;
Let's laugh and be going.

Let's laugh as we go down the path to the
vale—
Let's laugh at the going!
The red rose is dead, and the white rose
is pale,
And cold winds are blowing;
But love's all about us, the sun is as warm,
There's just as glad weather;
Your hand in my hand, then who fears any
storm!
We're going together!

JUST A TOUCH OF LONGING

D O I miss the old home? Why,
I do miss the punkin pie
That I got my fill of when
Autumn had rolled 'round again;
Punkin pie as big around
As a cartwheel most, and browned
Just the sort of brown that melts
In your mouth like nothin' else!
Do I miss the old home? My!
I DO miss the punkin pie.

And I miss the killin' time!
Hog backbone and spareribs! I'm
All right till I start to think
Of the spring, an' how I'd drink
Out of it, a-lyin' down
Sprawlin' right out on the groun'
So's my lips could reach the spring;
Bet there ain't another thing

In the world that can compare
With that bubblin' spring back there.

An' I miss the cattle some,
Miss the cows. God made 'em dumb,
But their eyes 'ud seem to be
Sayin' worlds of things to me.
When I'd go into their stall
An' I'd pat each one and call
Her by name, an' she 'ud turn
An' her big ca'm eyes 'ud burn
With love for me. They was dumb
But I miss the cattle—some.

An' nights when the sticks 'ud fall
Inter coals, an' when the hall
Would be full of ghosts, to scare
Little boys until their hair
Would feel prickly—Do I miss
The old home, the mother-kiss—
Well, this is 'twixt me and you
I 'bout half believe I do!
An' I always sort o' sigh
At the thought of punkin pie.

RESTING WITH NOVEMBER

YOU could hardly tell November by the weather; it's so clear
That sky-scrapers in the city, miles away,
 look just as near
As the bunch of trees off yonder, and the wildbirds seem to sing
Just as sweet a song as ever they sung to us in the spring;
And the trees, as fur as I see, are a-lookin'
 'bout the same,
'Ceptin' now and then a sweetgum is a-bustin' into flame,
An' I never felt more fittin' to chop wood or go an' plow,—
An' I never felt less like it than I happen to right now.

My old blood seems fairly rompin', like red licker, through my veins;

An' I ought to drive the hosses, with
a-rattlin' of their chains,
Where fall plowin' is a-waitin', an' there's
other things to do;
But the air is so perfumey, and the sky is
such a blue,
An' the roses are so bloomin', and the can-
nas such a red,
An' the violets so smilin' where they're
hidin' in their bed,
An' the whole world looks so restful, it
should be ag'in' the law
For a man to do a thing but stand around
and chew a straw.

I would like to stand out yonder by the
front fence, stand all day,
So's to see the city people in their autos
hike away
For a day out in the country, for to spin
across the hills;
Where the sweetness of November just
wells up and overspills
Till no one can help but get it, get full of it
through and through,

Of the redness of the cannas—but as
certain as I do,
When I'm half lost in my dreamin', an'
have stood out there a spell,
Some of them will stop an' ask me if I've
got some eggs to sell.

Then I'll have to quit my dreamin' to hunt
eggs and such like stuff;
An' the dream that I am dreamin' will have
left me sure enough;
So I dassn't stand out yonder where the
autos hike along;
If I want to dream in quiet, and to hear
the mockingbird's song,
There ain't no place that's so quiet as
behind the barn for me,
Where the yellow sun is fallin', an' where
people lets me be;
Wife imagines I am workin', an' the
honkers go on by;
But I'm restin' with November, an' the
wild birds, an' the sky.

THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

ME? Happy? I could hop up a swaying
twig an' swing,
If it was strong—I'm gittin' stout—an'
sing an' sing an' sing
Until the whole world turned its head to
hear the music roll;
An' still I'd sing, an' sing till I poured out
my soul

I could—till I poured out my soul in one
last gasp o' glee,
Perched right up an a swayin' twig on
some tall Christmas tree,
A-tearin' loose an' spreadin' out, so clear
an' high an' long
That all the birds 'ud hush, an' all the
world be filled with song.

I don't know what it is that's got into me,
I'm so glad!

But somehow this is just the best Christ-
mas I ever had!

I think it must be just because love's piled
up more an' more,

Until there's more love in the world than
ever was before!

The little children on the streets—each
little girl and boy—

Are busier than teapots are, just bubblin'
full o' joy!

An' all the stores in all the town where
tramplin' buyers shove,

Have fairly got their walls bulged out,
they are so filled with love.

If each clerk had a thousand hands she'd
have all she could do;

But not a one is lookin' glum, an' not a
one is blue;

They're filled with Christmas spirit till it
shines out of their eyes,
It's in the bundles they wrap up, an' in
their sweet replies.

I wish for them all that they wish, an'
then a whole lot more;
An' for the little bits o' tads just smilin'
in life's door
I wish a life of Christmases as glad as this,
by jing!
I wish I COULD perch on a twig an' sing
an' sing an' sing!

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